

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of claims:**

Claims 1-4 (cancelled).

Claim 5 (previously presented): A vehicle occupant protection apparatus, comprising:

a control device for a vehicle occupant protection device configured to output a control command;

an impact sensing device connected to said control device; and

a device for sensing an object or a person in the interior of a vehicle disposed spatially separate from and connected to said control device for receiving the control command output by said control device, said device including:

a sensor for sensing an object or a person in an interior of a vehicle;

a memory; and

a control unit connected to said memory for storing sensor data or data derived therefrom in said memory upon

receiving a corresponding control command from said control device, said control unit causing an impact code transmitted via an interface to be stored in said memory.

Claim 6 (original): The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said control device is programmed to output the control command if the vehicle occupant protection means is triggered.

Claim 7 (original): The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said control device is configured to output the control command as a function of an impact signal of said impact sensing device.

Claim 8 (original): The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said control device is configured to output the control command if a start of an impact is detected when an impact signal exceeds a given threshold value.

Claim 9 (previously presented): A method for sensing an object or a person in an interior of a vehicle, which comprises:  
sensing with a sensor whether an object or a person is in the interior of the vehicle;

supplying sensor data or data derived therefrom to a control device, arranged spatially separate from the sensor, for a vehicle occupant protection means;

storing the sensor data or data derived therefrom in a device containing the sensor when there is a corresponding control command supplied to the device, wherein the sensor data are or data derived therefrom is stored if the vehicle occupant protection means is to be triggered or is triggered.

Claim 10 (cancelled).

Claim 11 (previously presented): The method according to claim 9, which comprises storing the sensor data or data derived therefrom if a start of an impact is detected.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method according to claim 11, which comprises terminating the storing step if the vehicle occupant protection means has not been triggered.